

EXHIBIT 2

NDEBELE FUNERAL

By Ivan Suazo

Players: DAWETI, female, 24
 THABO, male, 22

A shanty in the Soweto township near
Johannesburg, South Africa.

DAWETI has just finished building a rather
modest and beat-up wooden coffin. She
steps inside the coffin and, lying there,
begins to sing a melancholy song popular
among Black South Africans: "Senzeni Na."

THABO enters. Daweti stops singing as she
hears him approach. He sings the same
song, but in an up-beat manner, dancing.
Daweti jumps out of the coffin and quickly
pushes it into the darkness upstage.

Thabo bangs on the tin door of the shanty.

THABO

Daweti! Daweti!

DAWETI

Don't knock, Thabo!

THABO

Open up, Daweti!

DAWETI

You're going to bring my entire shanty down!

THABO

That's okay now!

DAWETI

Go home, Thabo! I'm busy!

Thabo rips the door of the shack.

THABO

(holding the door)

I think I just found my surfboard for our road trip to Durban.

DAWETI

What the hell's gotten into you?

THABO

Hell has never gotten into me, babe.

DAWETI

You just ripped my door!

THABO

I did? Well, it was more like a piece of tin anyway. Don't you think?

DAWETI

Fix it!

THABO

Why? You don't need this waste anymore.

(he finds her cigarettes)

And you don't need these, either!

DAWETI

Didn't you get my group email? I wrote that I did not want to be bothered these days.

THABO

You mean to tell me that you plan on building the new house by yourself?

DAWETI

What house?

THABO

You're funny. I saw the concrete outside. The bricks, the cement, the sand --

DAWETI

Those aren't mine!

THABO

Then why are they in your yard?

DAWETI

Don't call it a yard! I'm keeping those things for Pamela.

THABO

Pamela has her own yard to keep things in.

DAWETI

Don't call it a yard.

THABO

So you're saying that all that cement and all that sand out there is for Pam?

DAWETI

Yes. I'm busy, Thabo, so --

THABO

Then why is it that Pamela has already assembled her brand new home-building kit, courtesy of the Housing Ministry itself?

DAWETI

(pause, reflection)

I thought Pamela was on the waiting list?

THABO

Not anymore. Government sent her the materials yesterday. Oscar's helping her build it as we speak. Now come on! Where's the wood? I'd like to build a home by the end of the week.

DAWETI

Ay, wena.

THABO

Zapa, wena! Come, come! Let's do this.

DAWETI

I don't feel well today, Thabo. I'm not in the mood for that.

THABO

What are in you the mood for?

DAWETI

You know what I'm in the mood for.

THABO

(pause)

Sorry.

DAWETI

There's no point dwelling on that.

THABO

Have you been taking your meds?

DAWETI

You know I don't like talking about it.

THABO

That's what has this country on death's list. No one likes to talk about it.

DAWETI

Or use anything to prevent it. Now that's as much talk as you're getting from me --

He tries to search the house during several beats. She blocks each of his attempts by getting in his way, pulling him, etc.

THABO

(suspicious)

What were you doing before I came?

DAWETI

Working out.

THABO

And is smoking part of your cardio rush?

DAWETI

It opens up the lungs quite nice. Now if you don't mind --

THABO

Do you usually work out in jeans?

DAWETI

Yes! You know? It helps with circulation. Goodbye, Thabo.

THABO

Okay.

Thabo pushes her and runs upstage. He finds the coffin.

THABO

What's this?

DAWETI

None of your bloody business.

Thabo pushes the coffin to the forefront.

THABO

Is this a coffin?

DAWETI

It's a trunk.

THABO

Exactly how many dead bodies do you plan to keep as antiques?

DAWETI

Yours, for one, if you don't piss off!

THABO

Shut it. What are you doing with this? Is this the wood from the housing ministry?

DAWETI

I deserve it.

THABO

Deserve what?

DAWETI

Go home, ey?

THABO

This wood is meant to help you build a new home. Not death beds or crypts.

DAWETI

I'm not building a home.

THABO

Right. I'll go get some water. We'll need it to mix the cement.

DAWETI

If you're going to the well you might as well dive in.

THABO

What is wrong with you? Is it the medication?

DAWETI

I don't take pills for something that's incurable. I'm not a delusional optimist. Do I look like Mandela to you?

Beat. Thabo goes to the coffin and begins to kick it apart. Daweti stops him.

DAWETI

Behave, would you? This is my fucking shanty!

THABO

Not for long.

DAWETI

I deserve a coffin. Simple as that.

THABO

Why don't you worry about a coffin --

DAWETI

When? When there's enough lesions to render me incapable of worrying?

(pause)

Do you know what I did? I went to Ndebele Funeral.

THABO

What were you doing at Ndebele funeral home?

DAWETI

Like I said, I deserve a coffin. Simple as that. But not at the price they're asking. And not when the Afrikaaners have all the money in this fucking country. I deserve a good coffin while I'm dying --

THABO

You deserve a good roof while you're living.

DAWETI

I have a different opinion.

THABO

What's that?

DAWETI

That I'm done assuming, Thabo.

THABO

What assumptions, Daweti?

DAWETI

Assuming that the employment agency is going to call one of these days, I sit by the phone.

THABO

Everything's backed-up in this country.

DAWETI

No, this is a backwards country. Assuming that my family will write to me from the Transkei I wait for the mailman. Lo and behold...nothing.

THABO

Maybe they're backed up --

DAWETI

They're backwards. I'm their daughter and they treat me like a dog because of this thing I have. I'm qualified to be a typist, a secretary, I have a law degree, but I'm a dog because of this thing I have. This disease works like an eraser at the end of a very short pencil. There's no ink thick enough to write over it.

THABO

You're not dead yet.

DAWETI

No, but I'm wasting my time, and I'm not going to assume that I have much of it left. So can I please secure my death without you breathing down my neck?

THABO

And what makes you think you're wasting my time?

DAWETI

I don't like to make that assumption. You're a good friend. But you said yourself...you can't give me what I want.

THABO

I would but...I'd hate to be another statistic in this country, Daweti.

DAWETI

Don't worry about it, man.

THABO

I'll buy you a coffin.

DAWETI

You don't have money.

THABO

Well, then, I'll build you one after --

DAWETI

I already built one.

A long pause. Thabo unbuttons his shirt.

DAWETI

What are you doing?

Thabo kisses her. They trip into the coffin and go about their business.

DAWETI

Wait!

Daweti pulls a condom from her pocket, shows it to Thabo, who flings it away.

DAWETI

No, Thabo!

She holds another condom in her hand. Thabo flings this one too.

DAWETI

Damnit, Thabo!

Another condom. Another fling.

DAWETI

Shit, Thabo!

Another condom. Fling.

DAWETI

Fuck, Thabo!

THABO

That's what I'm trying to do!

Condom. Fling. Condom. Fling. Daweti protests: No, This is not right, etc. More condoms...

THABO

What are you, the Trojan Mule?

DAWETI

Stop, Thabo!

They struggle, banging on the coffin until it finally comes apart. They topple out, find some distance between them. In a moment, Thabo picks up the wooden pieces.

DAWETI

You know, as much as I want to, I'm not going to ignore what I have for the sake of a little fun.

THABO

For some reason I knew you would say that.

She helps him pick up the pieces.

DAWETI

I'm not going to build a home.

THABO

Who has said anything about building a home?

Thabo helps Daweti put the pieces of wood back in place to form the coffin again.

DAWETI

That song you were singing on the way here is not supposed to be uplifting, you know.

THABO

(off the wood)

Talk about using things in a way they're not supposed to be used.

DAWETI

It's not just that. You have a terrible voice.

THABO

Blow me, babe.

DAWETI

Wish I could.

The end.